

2006-2007

# The PACT Performance of Historically Underachieving Groups of Children in SC Elementary & Middle Schools

Technical Report



**SC EDUCATION**  
**OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

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**The PACT Performance of Historically Underachieving Groups of Children in South Carolina  
Elementary and Middle Schools: Technical Report  
April 2007**

**Executive Summary**

This is the fifth annual report on progress toward closing the gaps in Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) achievement among demographic groups of South Carolina students enrolled in grades 3 through 8.

- Differences in achievement at the Basic or above and the Proficient or Advanced performance levels were studied for White students, African-American students, Hispanic students, students participating in the federal free- or reduced-price lunch program, and students not participating in the federal lunch program (pay lunch).
- Student achievement on the PACT English language arts (ELA), math, science, and social studies tests was examined.

Findings:

- There was an increase in ELA achievement and little change in math achievement in 2006 compared to 2005 (Table 1):
  - ✓ Approximately 76.5 percent of students statewide scored Basic or above on ELA and 75.6 percent scored Basic or above on math;
  - ✓ ELA performance at the Basic or above level increased 1.2 percentage points in 2006, and math performance at the Basic or above level decreased 0.2 percentage points;
  - ✓ ELA performance at the Proficient or Advanced level increased 1.4 percentage points in 2006, and math performance at the Proficient or Advanced level increased 0.1 percentage points;
  - ✓ In both 2005 and 2006 almost one-fourth of all students failed the ELA test and one-fourth failed the math test (scored Below Basic);
  - ✓ In both years approximately one-third of all students scored at the Proficient or Advanced level on the ELA test and one-third scored Proficient or Advanced on the math test.
- The sizes of the achievement gaps in 2006 compared to 2005 increased for some comparisons and decreased for others (Table 2):
  - ✓ ELA Basic or above – the gaps for all comparisons (White vs. African-American, White vs. Hispanic, and pay lunch vs. free- or reduced-price lunch) decreased in 2006;
  - ✓ ELA Proficient or Advanced – the White vs. African-American achievement gap decreased slightly, but the gaps between White vs. Hispanic and pay lunch vs. free- or reduced-price lunch increased;
  - ✓ Math Basic or above – the White vs. Hispanic achievement gap decreased, but the gaps for White vs. African-American and pay lunch vs. free- or reduced-price lunch students increased;
  - ✓ Math Proficient or Advanced – the achievement gaps increased for all three group comparisons.
- The range of achievement gaps in PACT ELA and Math observed in 2006:
  - ✓ Smallest gap: White students scored 19.2 percentage points higher than Hispanic students at the Basic or above level in math;
  - ✓ Largest gap: White students scored 28.9 percentage points higher than African-American students at the Proficient or Advanced level in math.
- Achievement gaps in PACT science and social studies performance were also studied in 2006 (Tables 3 and 4):

- ✓ Performance in science and social studies was lower than in ELA and math;
- ✓ The performance of all students declined in 2006 on the Science test at both the Basic or above and the Proficient or Advanced levels;
- ✓ Performance of all students on the Social Studies test at the Basic or above level also declined in 2006 but increased somewhat at the Proficient or Advanced level;
- ✓ Science was the most difficult test for all groups of students and the largest gaps in achievement were observed on the science test;
- One hundred thirty-five (16 percent) of the 866 elementary and middle schools studied were recognized for closing achievement gaps in PACT ELA or math in 2006 for at least one historically underachieving demographic group (African-American students; Hispanic students; free- or reduced-price lunch students) (Table 6).
  - ✓ This was a small decrease from the 138 schools identified in 2005, reflecting limited progress observed in PACT math in 2006;
  - ✓ Many of the schools recognized in previous years for closing the achievement gap have maintained their accomplishment:
    - Eighty-six schools recognized in 2006 were also recognized in 2005;
    - Twenty-seven of these schools have been recognized for five consecutive years.
  - ✓ Many of the schools recognized for closing the achievement gaps in 2006 were high-poverty schools:
    - twelve of the recognized schools had 90 percent or more of their students in poverty;
    - twelve more recognized schools had 80-89 percent of their students in poverty; and
    - sixteen additional recognized schools had 70-79 percent of their students in poverty.
  - ✓ The 40 high-poverty schools which were identified for closing achievement gaps in 2006 provide ample evidence that high performance levels can be achieved in high-poverty schools.

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The gaps in the test score achievement levels observed among demographic groups of students have been described extensively (Jencks and Phillips, 1998). The focus in many of these studies is on historically underachieving groups of students (members of ethnic minority groups and students in poverty). Reducing achievement gaps between student groups by raising the scores of lower scoring members of those groups while at the same time maintaining the achievement levels of high-achieving groups is recognized as a necessary component of efforts to raise overall educational performance.

In 2003 the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) issued a report on the achievement gaps revealed in the 2002 Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) data, in 2004 a second report based on 2003 PACT data was issued, a third report based on 2004 PACT data was made in June 2005, and a fourth report based on 2005 PACT results was published in 2006 (EOC, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006). The reports published in 2003 and 2004 reported the size of the achievement gaps and recognized schools which were closing those gaps, and the 2005 report presented a call to action listing actions which needed to be taken to reduce the achievement gaps in all South Carolina elementary and middle schools and the 2006 report reiterated that call to action. This report continues the previous studies by analyzing the 2006 PACT data.

What is the achievement gap?

The achievement gap is usually described in terms of differential performance by different student demographic groups on state or national achievement tests. For example, a finding from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is that the performance of White students exceeds that of African-American students, and the performance of students living above the poverty line exceeds that of students living in poverty (Grissmer, Flanagan, and Williamson, 1998; Hedges and Nowell, 1998).

A primary goal for education reform is to close the achievement gaps among demographic groups by raising the performance of all groups, with the expectation that the lower scoring groups must improve more rapidly than the higher scoring groups in order to “catch up.” The gap is described in terms of the target group (the lower-scoring demographic group) and the comparison group (the higher-scoring group). The target groups are members of historically underachieving demographic groups such as African-American or Hispanic students or students living in poverty, while the comparison groups include White students and students from more affluent families. The difference in achievement between the target and comparison groups at various performance levels (on PACT, these are the Basic, Proficient, or Advanced performance levels) is the achievement gap. Reducing the gap can be accomplished in two ways. Both the target and comparison groups can be poorly performing, resulting in small gaps but low achievement for all. Or, the achievement of both target and comparison groups can be raised to a similar high level. The latter is the desirable outcome, and the approach South Carolina educators are pursuing.

**The studies**

For these studies the EOC staff studied the 2005-2006 performance of elementary and middle school students on PACT English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies in grades three through eight. In addition to evaluating the performance of all students, the study focused on the performance of African-American, Hispanic, and White students, and of students participating in

the federal free- or reduced-price lunch program and students who pay for lunch. The target groups were African-American and Hispanic students and students participating in the free- or reduced-price lunch program. The comparison groups were White students and students not participating in the lunch program (pay lunch). A breakdown of the numbers and percentages of students belonging to these demographic groups in the PACT data used for this analysis revealed that approximately 54.2 percent of the students whose data were studied were White, 40.2 percent were African-American, 4.1 percent were Hispanic, and 1.5 percent belonged to other ethnic groups. Approximately 54.9 percent of the students received free- or reduced-price lunches, while 45.1 percent of the students had sufficiently high family incomes (higher than 185 percent of the federal poverty level) that they were not eligible to participate in the federal lunch program.

The PACT achievement levels studied were the percentages of students in the target and comparison groups scoring Basic or above (Basic, Proficient, or Advanced) and percentages scoring Proficient or higher (Proficient or Advanced) on the PACT English language arts (ELA), math, science, and social studies tests administered in spring 2006.

We also identified a group of schools that in 2006 were closing the achievement gap for at least one of the target groups in at least one subject area. These schools provide examples of educational practices that can be encouraged and implemented in other schools.

### **Results from the PACT study**

Data for the study came from two primary sources: 2006 PACT statewide test results for demographic groups published on the SC Department of Education (SDE) Web site ([www.ed.sc.gov](http://www.ed.sc.gov)) and the data published on the 2006 school report cards (provided by the SDE to the EOC on October 20, 2006). The 2006 PACT results reported on the SDE web site are from students who were tested in Spring 2006. The test data from the report card files are from students who were attending the same school on both the 45<sup>th</sup> day and on the first day of testing; these data also include data from students with disabilities tested at a lower grade level than their nominal grade based on age (off-level testing).

#### **PACT ELA and Math Achievement Gaps**

The data analysis is presented first at the statewide level for five demographic groups: African-American students; Hispanic students; White students; students participating in the federal free- or reduced-price lunch program (free- or reduced-price or subsidized meals); and students not participating in the federal lunch program (full-pay meals). The analyses are presented for the percentages of students scoring Basic or Above (e.g., Basic, Proficient, or Advanced) and for percentages of students scoring Proficient or Advanced.

The statewide results for the 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 PACT ELA and Math administrations are listed in Table 1, and the achievement gaps are listed in Table 2.

**Table 1**  
**2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 PACT ELA and Math Results By Demographic Group**

<b>ELA</b>										
<b>Demographic Group</b>	<b>Percent Basic or Above</b>					<b>Percent Proficient or Advanced</b>				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>All Students</b>	74.7	70.5	75.2	75.3	<b>76.5</b>	31.2	27.3	33.4	33.7	<b>35.1</b>
<b>White</b>	84.8	81.1	84.9	84.9	<b>85.3</b>	42.9	37.8	44.4	44.8	<b>46.1</b>
<b>African-American</b>	61.2	57.2	62.8	62.9	<b>64.8</b>	15.3	13.6	18.7	18.8	<b>20.2</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	NA	NA	61.6	63.2	<b>65.6</b>	NA	NA	22.5	23.7	<b>24.6</b>
<b>Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch</b>	63.3	58.9	64.8	65.1	<b>66.5</b>	16.7	14.6	20.3	20.6	<b>21.8</b>
<b>Pay Lunch</b>	86.9	83.5	86.3	86.6	<b>87.5</b>	46.4	41.4	47.3	48.3	<b>49.9</b>
<b>Math</b>										
<b>Demographic Group</b>	<b>Percent Basic or Above</b>					<b>Percent Proficient or Advanced</b>				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>All Students</b>	68.2	73.8	75.9	75.8	<b>75.6</b>	28.6	29.6	31.8	33.2	<b>33.3</b>
<b>White</b>	80.4	84.9	85.8	85.7	<b>85.6</b>	40.2	41.7	43.9	45.0	<b>45.5</b>
<b>African-American</b>	51.6	59.4	62.9	62.9	<b>62.2</b>	12.7	13.4	15.5	17.0	<b>16.6</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	NA	NA	65.4	65.4	<b>66.4</b>	NA	NA	21.6	23.5	<b>23.2</b>
<b>Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch</b>	55.4	63.0	66.1	66.3	<b>65.7</b>	15.2	16.1	18.5	20.1	<b>20.0</b>
<b>Pay Lunch</b>	81.8	85.9	86.5	86.5	<b>86.8</b>	42.8	44.5	46.1	47.8	<b>48.3</b>

NA - Not Available

Data Source: SC Department of Education

The data in Table 1 indicate that pay lunch students have the highest scores in all five years. The percentages of students scoring Proficient or Advanced are considerably lower than the percentages scoring Basic or above for all groups.

Regarding the performance on each test at each performance level in 2006 compared to 2005, the data in Table 1 also show:

- ELA Basic or above in 2006 increased for all students, African-American students, White students, Hispanic students, pay lunch students, and free- or reduced-price lunch students;
- ELA Proficient or Advanced increased for all students, African-American students, White students, Hispanic students, pay lunch students, and free- or reduced-price lunch students;

- Math Basic or above increased for Hispanic students and pay lunch students, and decreased for all students, African-American students, White students, and free- or reduced-price lunch students;
- Math Proficient or Advanced increased for all students, White students, and pay lunch students, and decreased for African-American students, Hispanic students , and free- or reduced-price lunch students.

The achievement gaps among the groups listed in Table 2 below were calculated by subtracting the performance of the target groups (African-American, Hispanic, and free- or reduced-price lunch) from that of the comparison groups (White and pay lunch). Since the comparison groups score higher than the target groups, the differences are positive. For example, the percentage of White students scoring Basic or above in ELA was 23.6 percentage points higher than African-American students in 2002, 23.9 percentage points higher in 2003, 22.1 percentage points higher in 2004, 22.0 percentage points higher in 2005, and 20.5 percentage points higher in 2006. The downward trend over the last three years in the sizes of the achievement gaps at the Basic or above level in ELA has been encouraging.

The gaps in 2006 ranged from a low of 19.2 percent (Math percent Basic or above for White vs. Hispanic students) to a high of 28.9 percent (Math percent Proficient or Advanced, White vs. African-American students). The results were mixed among the twelve possible comparisons of 2006 and 2005 gaps. All of the gaps at the Basic or above level in ELA decreased, but two of the three gaps at the ELA Proficient or Advanced level increased (White vs. Hispanic and pay lunch vs. free- or reduced-price lunch gaps increased and the White vs. African-American gap decreased slightly). In math at the Basic or above level two of the three gaps increased and one decreased (White vs. African-American and pay lunch vs. free- or reduced-price lunch gaps increased, and the White vs. Hispanic gap decreased). All three of the gaps at the Proficient or Advanced performance level in math increased.

**Table 2**  
**2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 PACT ELA and Math**  
**Achievement Gaps Among Demographic Groups**

<b>ELA</b>										
<b>Comparison Group – Target Group</b>	<b>Percent Basic or Above</b>					<b>Percent Proficient or Advanced</b>				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>White African-American</b>	23.6	23.9	22.1	22.0	<b>20.5↓</b>	27.6	24.2	25.7	26.0	<b>25.9↓</b>
<b>White Hispanic</b>	NA	NA	23.3	21.7	<b>19.7↓</b>	NA	NA	21.9	21.1	<b>21.5↑</b>
<b>Pay Lunch – Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	23.6	24.6	21.5	21.5	<b>21.0↓</b>	29.7	26.8	27.0	27.7	<b>28.1↑</b>
<b>Math</b>										
<b>Comparison Group – Target Group</b>	<b>Percent Basic or Above</b>					<b>Percent Proficient or Advanced</b>				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>White African-American</b>	28.8	25.5	22.9	22.8	<b>23.4↑</b>	27.5	28.3	28.4	28.0	<b>28.9↑</b>
<b>White Hispanic</b>	NA	NA	20.4	20.3	<b>19.2↓</b>	NA	NA	22.3	21.5	<b>22.3↑</b>
<b>Pay Lunch – Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	26.4	22.9	20.4	20.2	<b>21.1↑</b>	27.6	28.4	27.6	27.7	<b>28.3↑</b>

NA = not available

↑ = gap increased from 2005

↓ = gap decreased from 2005

The achievement gaps for 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 are also displayed in Figures 1 – 4 for all groups (gap data for Hispanic students were not available in 2002 and 2003). Figures 1 and 2 present the data on the gaps in the percentages of students scoring at the Basic or above levels on PACT ELA and Math, respectively. In PACT ELA Basic or above (Figure 1), the sizes of the achievement gaps among the target and comparison groups were similar each year studied, but small decreases in the gaps since 2003 are notable. Minimal progress in reducing the gaps in ELA at the Basic or above levels has been achieved since 2002.

Progress in reducing the gaps in PACT Math performance at the Basic or above levels was consistent and encouraging through 2004, but leveled off in 2005 and increased somewhat in 2006 for White vs. African-American and pay lunch vs. free- or reduced-price lunch student comparisons (Figure 2). The gap between White and Hispanic student performance continued to decline in 2006, however.

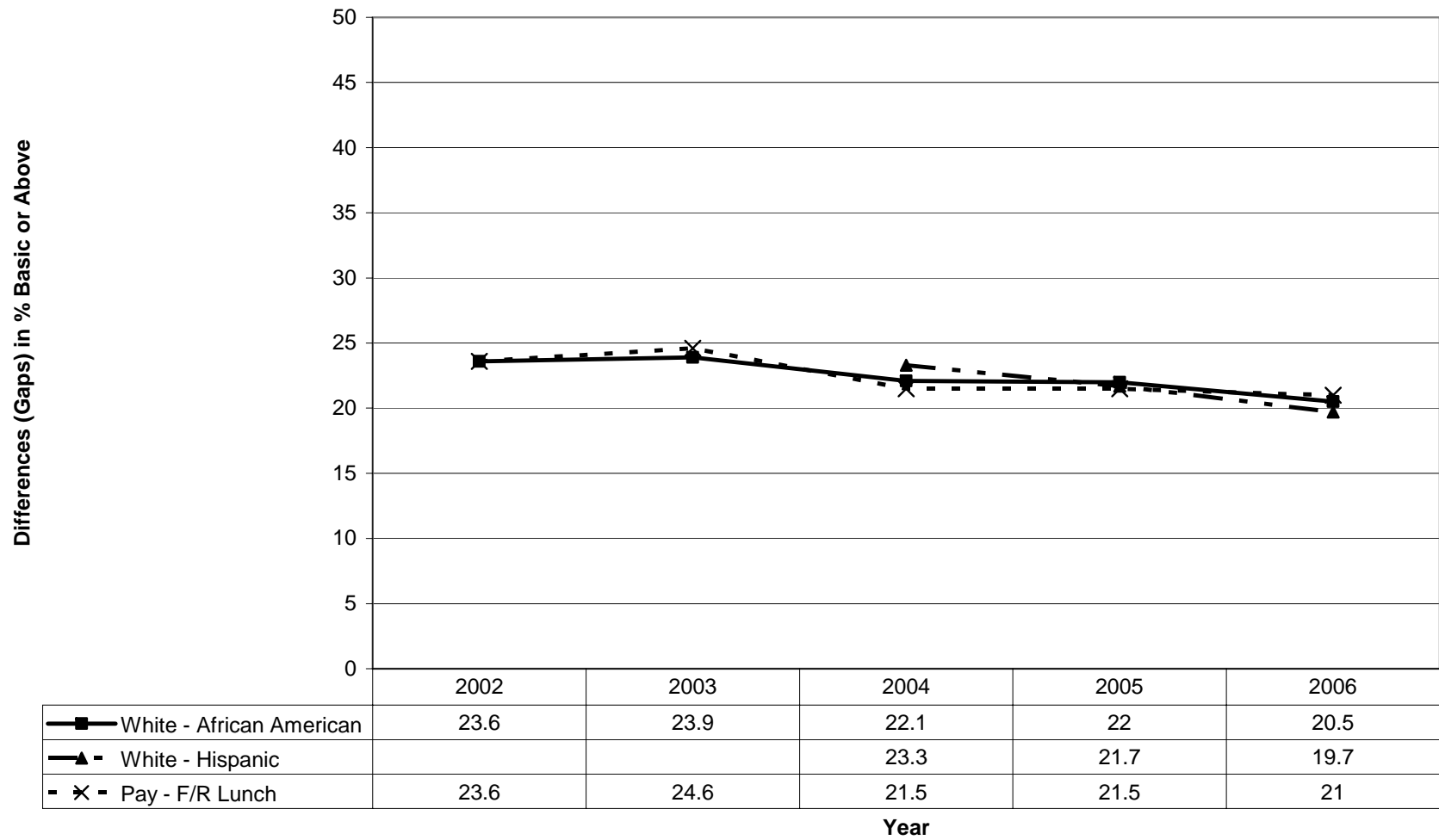
As shown in Figures 3 and 4, the achievement gaps observed at the Proficient or Advanced levels in PACT ELA and Math, respectively, are larger than those at the Basic or above performance levels for all groups. Further, the gaps at the Proficient or Advanced level of PACT ELA increased slightly in 2006 compared to 2005 for all groups but White vs. African-American students (Figure 3).



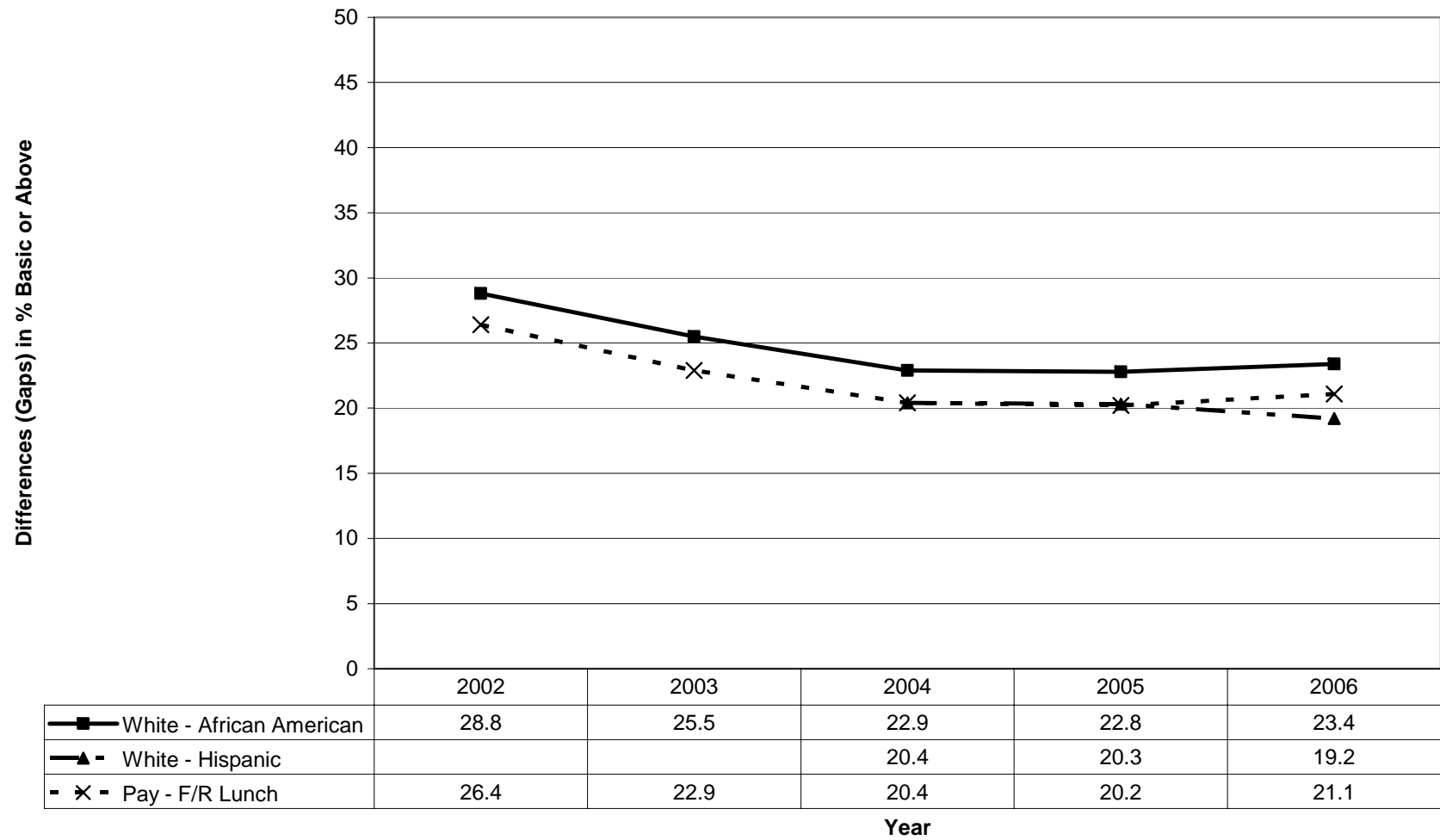
The largest achievement gap in ELA and Math performance was observed in PACT Math at the Proficient or Advanced level (White vs. African-American students, Figure 4). The second-largest gap (28.3 percentage points) was observed for pay lunch vs. free- or reduced-price lunch students.

The overall increases or very slight reductions of the achievement gaps at the Proficient or Advanced levels for both ELA and Math observed since 2002 are not encouraging if South Carolina is to meet its achievement goals for all students. It is heartening that there have been increases in the percentages of students scoring Proficient or Advanced in recent years, although those increases have been quite moderate in ELA.

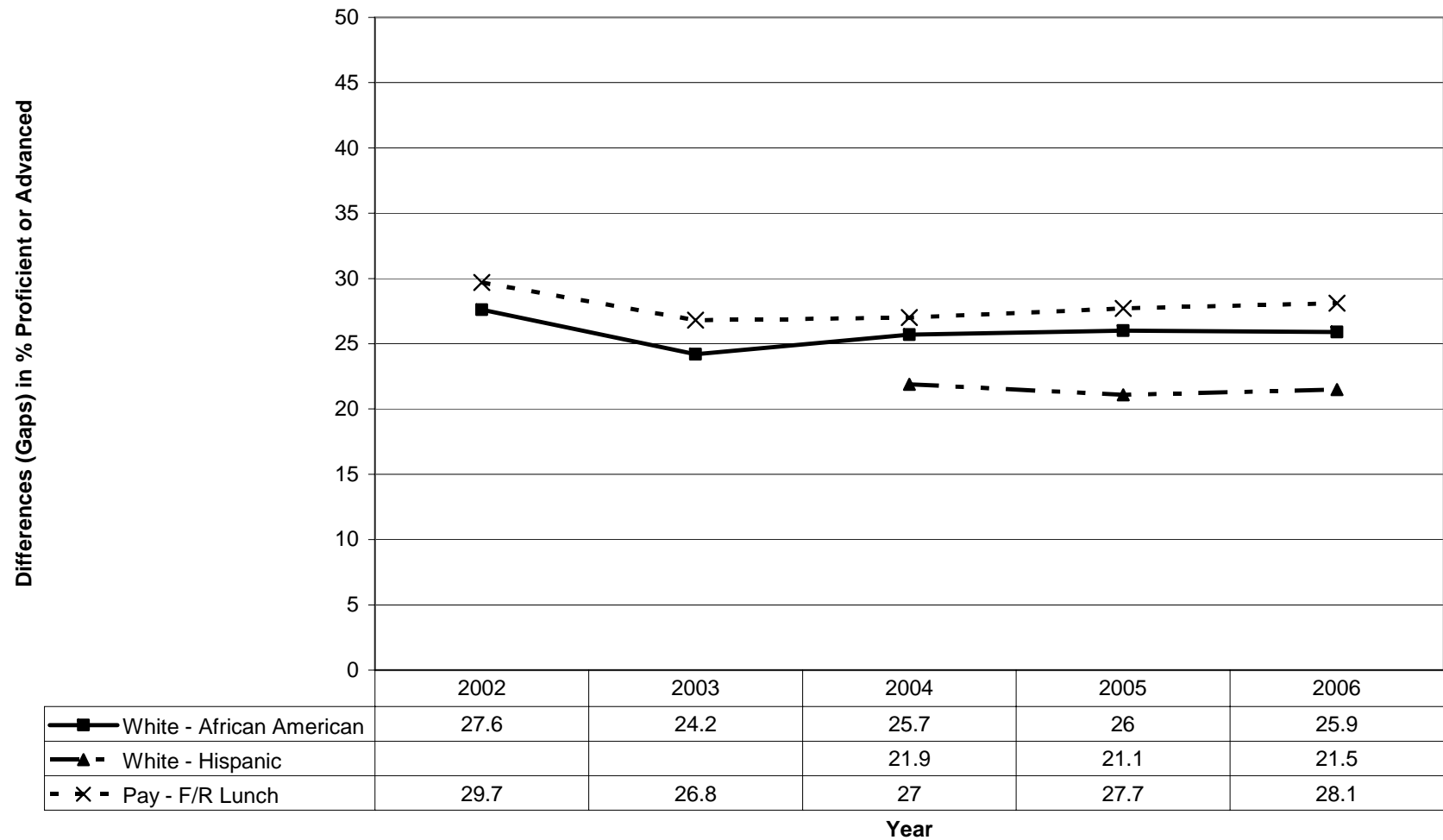
**Figure 1**  
**PACT ELA Achievement Gaps, Percent Basic or Above, 2002-2006**



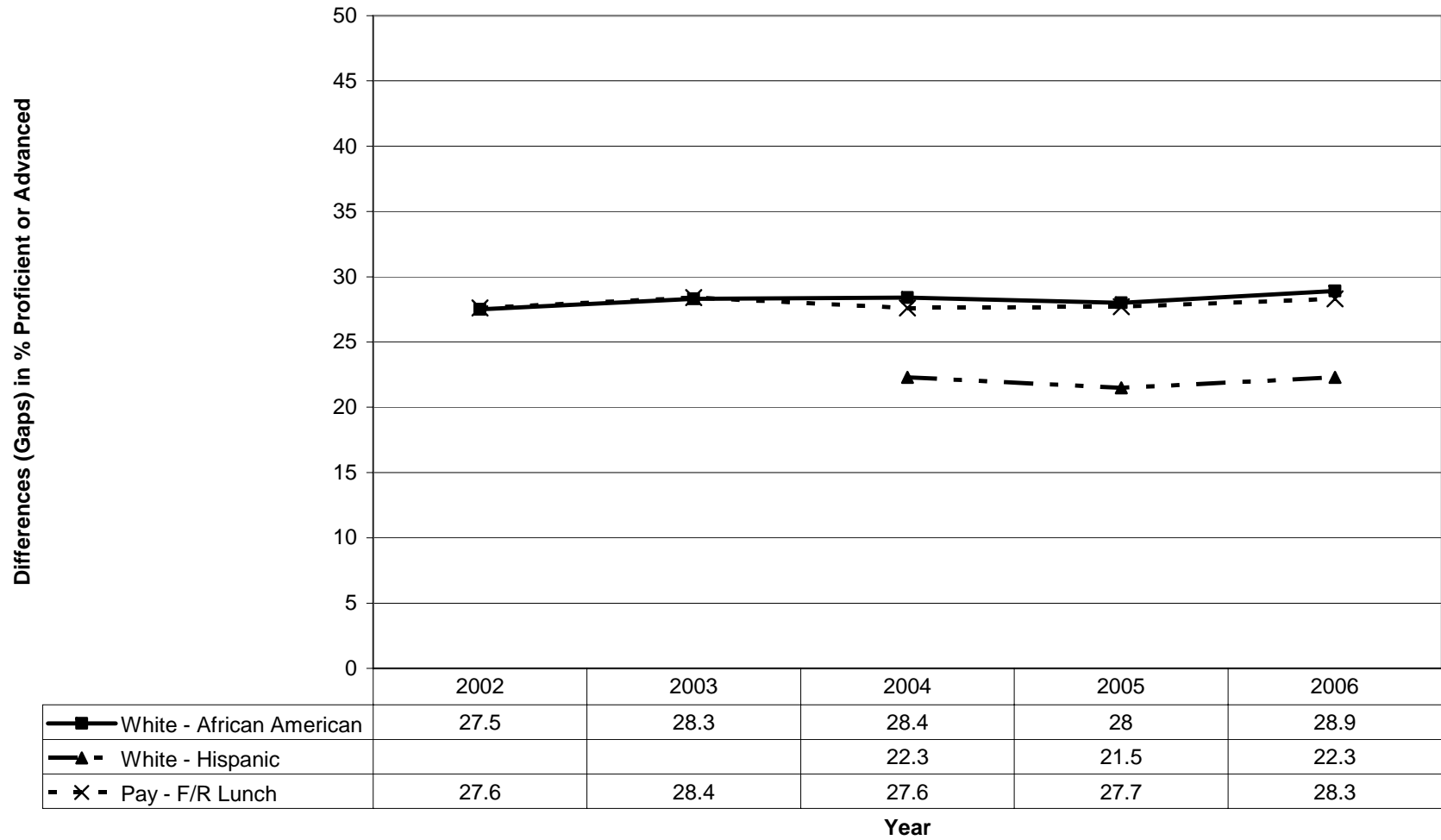
**Figure 2**  
**PACT Math Achievement Gaps, Percent Basic or Above, 2002-2006**



**Figure 3**  
**PACT ELA Achievement Gaps, Percent Proficient or Advanced, 2002-2006**



**Figure 4**  
**PACT Math Achievement Gaps, Percent Proficient or Advanced, 2002-2006**



## PACT Science and Social Studies Achievement Gaps in 2006

The PACT science and social studies tests in grades 3 through 8 were administered for the fourth year in Spring 2006. The science and social studies standards and tests are well established and it is appropriate that we begin evaluating the performance of demographic groups of students in these subject areas. The statewide results from the Spring 2005 and 2006 PACT science and social studies test administrations by demographic group are listed in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**2005 and 2006 PACT Science and Social Studies Results By Demographic Group**

Demographic Group	Science				Social Studies			
	Percent Basic or Above		Percent Proficient or Advanced		Percent Basic or Above		Percent Proficient or Advanced	
Year	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
<b>All Students</b>	60.1	<b>58.9</b>	26.1	<b>25.6</b>	68.3	<b>67.1</b>	27.0	<b>27.5</b>
<b>White</b>	74.4	<b>73.5</b>	38.2	<b>37.5</b>	79.5	<b>77.6</b>	38.1	<b>37.8</b>
<b>African-American</b>	41.2	<b>39.4</b>	10.1	<b>9.4</b>	53.2	<b>52.9</b>	12.1	<b>13.4</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	49.5	<b>49.1</b>	16.2	<b>15.8</b>	61.7	<b>60.3</b>	19.0	<b>20.3</b>
<b>Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch</b>	45.7	<b>44.1</b>	13.1	<b>12.7</b>	56.1	<b>55.0</b>	14.2	<b>15.1</b>
<b>Pay Lunch</b>	76.7	<b>76.2</b>	41.1	<b>40.4</b>	82.3	<b>81.1</b>	41.8	<b>41.8</b>

Data Source: SC Department of Education

The 2006 science test was the most difficult for all students. Pay lunch students had the highest performance on the science and social studies tests at both the Basic or above and Proficient or Advanced levels, and African-American students had the lowest performance. Less than one-half of the African-American, Hispanic, and free- or reduced-price lunch students passed the science test at the minimal, Basic, level. Approximately one in ten African-American students, one in six Hispanic students, and one in eight free- or reduced-price lunch students scored Proficient or Advanced on the science test. Performance was somewhat higher on the social studies test, with one in eight African-American students, one in five Hispanic students, and one in seven free- or reduced-price lunch students scoring Proficient or Advanced.

Performance in Science at both the Basic or above and the Proficient or Advanced levels declined for all groups in 2006 compared to 2005. Performance at the Basic or above level in Social Studies also declined for all groups in 2006. Social Studies performance at the Proficient or Advanced level increased in 2006 for all students, African-American students, Hispanic students, and free- or reduced-price lunch students, declined for White students, and remained the same as in 2005 for pay lunch students.

The gaps in PACT science and social studies achievement among these demographic groups of students are listed in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**2005 and 2006 PACT Science and Social Studies**  
**Achievement Gaps Among Demographic Groups**

Comparison Group – Target Group	Science				Social Studies			
	Percent Basic or Above		Percent Proficient or Advanced		Percent Basic or Above		Percent Proficient or Advanced	
Year	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
White – African-American	33.2	34.1↑	28.1	28.1	26.3	24.6↓	26.0	24.4↓
White – Hispanic	24.9	24.4↓	22.0	21.7↓	17.8	17.3↓	19.1	17.5↓
Pay Lunch – Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch	31.0	32.1↑	28.0	27.7↓	26.2	26.1↓	27.6	26.7↓

↑ = gap increased from 2005

↓ = gap decreased from 2005

The achievement gaps in science are larger than those in social studies. The gaps between White and African-American students in science achievement at the Basic or above level are the largest of all the demographic comparisons on all the PACT tests (ELA, math, science, and social studies) in 2006. The achievement differences between White and Hispanic students are smaller than those observed between White and African-American students and pay lunch and free- or reduced-price lunch students. Of the 12 different achievement gap comparisons for Science and Social Studies, 9 decreased in 2006, 2 increased, and 1 remained the same as in 2005.

### Identification of schools closing the gap

To provide further insight into the achievement gap in South Carolina, we identified schools that showed high levels of performance by one or more of the target groups in ELA, math, or both. The performance of the target group of students had to be in the range of the statewide performance of the comparison group or higher. For example, a school in which the percentage of African-American students (target group) scoring Proficient or Advanced was in the range of or higher than the percentage of White students (comparison group) scoring at that level *statewide* would meet the criteria for selection. The following process was used to identify these schools.

These prerequisite conditions had to be met for a school to be considered:

- The school must have test results from at least one of the target groups to be considered;

- The size of the target group in the school must be large enough to provide reliable information (at least 30 students enrolled and tested);
- The target group and all students category in the school must meet the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress objectives for percent tested and performance.

The target and comparison groups studied were:

<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Comparison Group</b>
African American Students	White Students
Hispanic Students	White Students
Free/Reduced Price Lunch Students	Pay Lunch Students

To obtain the achievement cut points needed to identify schools making exemplary progress in closing the gap, schools were ranked by the 2006 PACT achievement performance of all students in the school for these tests and performance levels:

- ELA - percent scoring Basic or above;
- ELA - percent scoring Proficient or Advanced;
- Math - percent scoring Basic or above;
- Math - percent scoring Proficient or Advanced.

The achievement level for each test corresponding to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile and the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for all students in all schools was identified. These data and the averages of the school percentages of students scoring at each achievement level for all students and for the demographic groups are shown in Table 5. These analyses were carried out with school as the level of analysis.



**Table 5**  
**75<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> Percentiles and Averages of**  
**School Percentages of Students in Each Category**  
**2006 PACT Test Performance**

<b>PACT Test Performance Levels</b>	<b>All Students – 75<sup>th</sup> School Percentile and Above (Recognition Level)</b>	<b>All Students – 90<sup>th</sup> School Percentile and Above (Distinguished Level)</b>	<b>Mean School Performance  All Students</b>	<b>Mean School Performance  African- American Students</b>	<b>Mean School Performance  Hispanic Students</b>	<b>Mean School Performance  White Students</b>	<b>Mean School Performance  Free/Reduced Lunch Students</b>	<b>Mean School Performance  Pay Lunch Students</b>
ELA percent Basic or above	86.2%	91.6%	76.5%	70.9%	67.0%	84.1%	70.0%	85.7%
Math percent Basic or above	85.0%	90.5%	75.4%	68.2%	71.7%	84.4%	68.9%	84.8%
ELA percent Proficient or Advanced	47.0%	58.7%	35.8%	24.2%	26.0%	45.1%	25.8%	47.8%
Math percent Proficient or Advanced	42.7%	54.2%	32.8%	19.0%	26.3%	43.8%	22.7%	44.9%

Data Source: SC Department of Education [www.ed.sc.gov](http://www.ed.sc.gov)

The data displayed in Table 5 illustrate that the average performance of the target groups of students (African-American, Hispanic, and free- or reduced-price lunch students) at each performance level on each test is lower than the performance of all students statewide and considerably lower than the performance of the comparison groups (White and pay lunch students). The data also indicate that the 75<sup>th</sup> school percentile for all students is very similar to that of the average performance of White and pay lunch students, and that the 90<sup>th</sup> school percentile for all students is well above the average performance of any of the comparison groups studied. If the average performance of target group students were at the same level as comparison group students, the students in the target groups would be scoring at approximately the 75<sup>th</sup> school percentile for all students based on current data. Since the goal is to eliminate the achievement gaps among groups while at the same time achieving at high levels for all groups, the 75<sup>th</sup> school percentile for all students was chosen as the goal for target group achievement for this study – if all target group students had achieved at this level while at the same time the comparison groups achieved at the same high level, the gaps in achievement would be eliminated. If a target group achieves at the level of schools at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for all students, its performance would be exceptional.

To identify schools closing the achievement gap, the performance of each qualifying target group (having at least 30 tested students) in each school was evaluated against the performance corresponding to the 75<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles for all schools statewide. The criteria for identification were that the target group had to score at least at the level of the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for all students in all schools (this level of performance was near that of the comparison groups) on at least one subject area test. For example, a school in which 37 of the 42 African-American students (88.1 percent) tested scored Basic or above on the ELA test would be identified as a school closing the gap because 88.1 percent of the target group (African-American students) scored Basic or above, which is greater than the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for all students (86.2 percent - see Table 5).

The performance of each target group in schools meeting the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile criterion was also examined to see if it was at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for all students in all schools (greatly exceeded the performance of the comparison group). In our example school, the 88.1 percent scoring Basic or above was less than the criterion at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (91.6 percent - Table 5).

In summary, the following performance criteria for the target groups (African-American, Hispanic, and free- or reduced-price lunch students) were used to identify schools closing the gap:

- To be Recognized for closing the gap in ELA, at least 86.2% of the target group must score Basic or above, or 47.0% must score Proficient or Advanced;
- To be Recognized for closing the gap in math, at least 85.0% of the target group must score Basic or above, or 42.7% must score Proficient or Advanced;
- For the designation of Distinguished performance in ELA, at least 91.6% of the target group must score Basic or above, or 58.7% must score Proficient or Advanced;
- For the designation of Distinguished performance in math, at least 90.5% of the target group must score Basic or above, or 54.2% must score Proficient or Advanced.

Schools in which at least one target group met or exceeded the criteria on at least one of the tests were identified as schools showing strong evidence of closing the achievement gap. Schools having at least one target group scoring at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher were designated “Recognized for Closing the Achievement Gap.” Schools in which a target group

scored at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above were designated “Distinguished for Closing the Achievement Gap.”

#### Results:

Eight hundred sixty-six schools had sufficient data to be evaluated for the performance of at least one target group of students. One hundred and four schools reporting PACT test data (12 percent) did not have a sufficient number of African-American students (at least 30), and thirteen schools (1.5 percent) did not have a sufficient number of free- or reduced-price lunch participants, so they could not be evaluated for the performance of these target groups. One hundred-twelve schools (12.9 percent) had sufficient numbers of Hispanic students (at least 30) to include in the analysis of 2006 data, compared to 98 schools having sufficient data in 2005.

One hundred thirty-five schools were identified for closing the gap for at least one group in at least one subject area. These schools represent approximately 16 percent of all schools having sufficient numbers of students in the target groups for analysis.

- Ninety schools had at least one target group achieve between the 75<sup>th</sup> and 89<sup>th</sup> state percentiles (Recognition);
- Forty-five had at least one group achieve at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher (Distinguished).

All 135 schools recognized for performance in 2006 are listed in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
**Schools with Target Demographic Groups Having PACT Performance**  
**“Recognized” or “Distinguished” for Closing the Achievement Gap in 2006**

District	School	School ID	% Poverty Level	Gap(s) Closing		
				African-American*	Hispanic*	Free/Reduced Lunch*
ABBEVILLE	Diamond Hill Elementary <sup>b</sup>	160019	71.63			21
AIKEN	Aiken Elementary <sup>c</sup>	201016	54.17	1		17
AIKEN	Belvedere Elementary	201019	56.4			17
AIKEN	Hammond Hill Elementary <sup>i</sup>	201031	56.14	2		18
AIKEN	Millbrook Elementary <sup>b</sup>	201035	58.02	1		17, 19, 21
AIKEN	North Augusta Elementary	201039	66.06	1		17
AIKEN	Warrenville Elementary	201052	77.01	1		
AIKEN	Oakwood-Windsor Elementary <sup>d</sup>	201054	85	2, 5		23
ANDERSON 1	Palmetto Elementary <sup>b</sup>	401004	78.61	2, 3, 6		17, 19, 21
ANDERSON 1	Cedar Grove Elementary <sup>a</sup>	401005	57.65			18, 19, 21
ANDERSON 1	Pelzer Elementary <sup>b</sup>	401007	85.92			18, 19
ANDERSON 1	Wren Middle <sup>b</sup>	401008	40.37			21
ANDERSON 1	West Pelzer Elementary <sup>a</sup>	401009	59.59			18, 21
ANDERSON 1	Spearman Elementary <sup>i</sup>	401011	62.64			17
ANDERSON 1	Wren Elementary <sup>a</sup>	401013	34.84			17, 19, 21
ANDERSON 1	Hunt Meadows Elementary <sup>a</sup>	401014	40.51			18, 19, 21
ANDERSON 2	Belton Elementary <sup>n</sup>	402013	64.12			17
ANDERSON 2	Honea Path Elementary <sup>a</sup>	402018	62.63			17, 22
ANDERSON 2	Wright Elementary <sup>b</sup>	402021	53.33			18, 20, 22, 24
ANDERSON 5	Centerville Elementary <sup>b</sup>	405044	59.03	5		21
ANDERSON 5	Concord Elementary <sup>c</sup>	405045	38.91	2, 5		18, 19, 21
ANDERSON 5	Whitehall Elementary <sup>b</sup>	405059	82.21			17
BEAUFORT	Shell Point Elementary <sup>c</sup>	701018	71.62	1, 3		
BEAUFORT	Coosa Elementary	701025	32.47	1		
BERKELEY	Westview Elementary <sup>n</sup>	801031	38.96	1, 5		
BERKELEY	Marrington Elementary <sup>a</sup>	801033	53.96			17, 20
BERKELEY	Howe Hall AIMS School <sup>c</sup>	801036	43.72			17, 19
BERKELEY	Hanahan Elementary <sup>n</sup>	801044	59.84			19
BERKELEY	Westview Primary <sup>m</sup>	801045	52.4	1, 3		21

District	School	School ID	% Poverty Level	Gap(s) Closing		
				African-American*	Hispanic*	Free/Reduced Lunch*
CALHOUN	Sandy Run Elementary	901008	73.43			21
CHARLESTON	Harbor View Elementary <sup>c</sup>	1001043	45.8	1		17, 19, 21, 23
CHARLESTON	Minnie Hughes Elementary <sup>d</sup>	1001045	98.22	1, 6, 8		17, 22, 24
CHARLESTON	E B Ellington Elementary	1001059	96.44	2, 4, 6, 8		18, 20, 22, 24
CHARLESTON	Jennie Moore Elementary <sup>n</sup>	1001061	43.94	2, 6, 7		18, 22
CHARLESTON	Oakland Elementary <sup>l</sup>	1001068	83.18			19, 21, 23
CHARLESTON	Orange Grove Elementary <sup>e</sup>	1001069	69.05	1		17
CHARLESTON	Matilda F Dunston Elementary	1001072	95.87			21
CHARLESTON	Sanders Clyde Elementary <sup>d</sup>	1001076	99.52	1, 3, 6, 8		17, 19, 22, 24
CHARLESTON	Springfield Elementary <sup>d</sup>	1001081	68.5			17, 19, 21
CHARLESTON	St Andrews School of Math & Science <sup>c</sup>	1001082	55.6	1, 6		17, 22
CHARLESTON	Stono Park Elementary <sup>a</sup>	1001085	90.68	1, 5		17, 21
CHARLESTON	Mamie Whitesides Elementary <sup>l</sup>	1001090	37.52	1		17
CHARLESTON	Ashley River Creative Arts <sup>l</sup>	1001091	32.59	1, 3		17, 19
CHARLESTON	C E Williams Middle Creative & Scien.	1001092	38.74			17
CHARLESTON	Buist Academy <sup>a</sup>	1001094	16.83	2, 4, 6, 8		18, 20, 22, 24
CHARLESTON	Belle Hall Elementary	1001096	20.05	1, 3		
CHARLESTON	Charleston School of the Arts <sup>l</sup>	1001098	21.57	2, 5		18, 21
CHARLESTON	Charles Pinckney Elementary <sup>e</sup>	1001102	16.64			17, 21
CHARLESTON	James Island Elementary	1001107	62.96			17
CHARLESTON	Drayton Hall Elementary	1001109	42.44	3, 5		17, 19, 21
CHESTERFIELD	Ruby Elementary <sup>n</sup>	1301023	78.91			21
CLARENDON 1	St Paul Primary <sup>l</sup>	1401005	98.44	1, 4, 5		17, 20, 21
DARLINGTON	Pate Elementary <sup>a</sup>	1601018	89.4	2, 4, 5		17, 19, 21
DILLON 2	East Elementary <sup>b</sup>	1702007	88.55	1, 5		19, 21
DILLON 2	South Elementary <sup>k</sup>	1702008	91.74	1, 6		18, 22, 23
DORCHESTER 2	Spann Elementary	1802010	57.49	1		17
DORCHESTER 2	R H Rollings Middle School of Arts <sup>a</sup>	1802012	18.51	2, 3, 5, 7		18, 19, 22, 23
DORCHESTER 2	Newington Elementary	1802013	54.61	1, 3		17, 19
DORCHESTER 2	Flowertown Elementary <sup>n</sup>	1802014	62.08	3		
DORCHESTER 2	Windsor Hill Elementary <sup>d</sup>	1802019	58.39	1		17
DORCHESTER 2	Beech Hill Elementary	1802021	48.96	1		17
EDGEFIELD	Merriwether Elementary <sup>a</sup>	1901008	60			17

District	School	School ID	% Poverty Level	Gap(s) Closing		
				African-American*	Hispanic*	Free/Reduced Lunch*
FLORENCE 1	Carver Elementary <sup>n</sup>	2101009	48.07			19
FLORENCE 1	Royall Elementary <sup>j</sup>	2101017	56.28			23
GEORGETOWN	Browns Ferry Elementary <sup>b</sup>	2201009	94.88	2, 4, 6, 8		18, 20, 22, 24
GEORGETOWN	Pleasant Hill Elementary <sup>b</sup>	2201012	86.95	5		21
GEORGETOWN	Plantersville Elementary <sup>j</sup>	2201020	95.89	2, 5, 7		18, 21, 23
GREENVILLE	Blythe Academy	2301038	46.46	3		
GREENVILLE	Plain Elementary	2301046	39.56			17
GREENVILLE	Lake Forest Elementary	2301063	73.03		9	
GREENVILLE	Mauldin Elementary <sup>d</sup>	2301067	49.29		9	
GREENVILLE	Pelham Road Elementary	2301079	29.34	2		
GREENVILLE	Simpsonville Elementary <sup>c</sup>	2301081	52.21		14	
GREENVILLE	Buena Vista Elementary <sup>n</sup>	2301093	24.68	5		
GREENVILLE	Oakview Elementary <sup>a</sup>	2301108	12.54	2, 3, 6		
GREENVILLE	Mauldin Middle <sup>n</sup>	2301110	24.85		13	
GREENVILLE	Bell's Crossing Elementary <sup>c</sup>	2301112	25.18	2		
HORRY	Aynor Elementary <sup>b</sup>	2601014	71.95			23
HORRY	Homewood Elementary <sup>n</sup>	2601025	87.06			17, 23
HORRY	Lakewood Elementary <sup>a</sup>	2601029	53.38			17, 20, 21, 23
HORRY	Midland Elementary <sup>b</sup>	2601033	71.19			17, 19, 23
HORRY	Myrtle Beach Elementary <sup>b</sup>	2601034	70.65	1, 3	10, 12, 14, 16	18, 20, 22, 23
HORRY	Forestbrook Elementary <sup>a</sup>	2601046	56.65			18, 20, 21, 24
HORRY	North Myrtle Beach Elementary <sup>c</sup>	2601048	70.47			17
HORRY	Seaside Elementary <sup>a</sup>	2601050	57.87			18, 19, 21, 23
HORRY	Myrtle Beach Intermediate <sup>c</sup>	2601053	67.59		11, 15	23
HORRY	North Myrtle Beach Intermediate	2601059	63.82			17, 21, 23
KERSHAW	Bethune Elementary <sup>j</sup>	2801011	88.49	1		21
KERSHAW	Blaney Elementary	2801012	58.48	1		
KERSHAW	Mt Pisgah Elementary <sup>d</sup>	2801020	79.55			17, 22
KERSHAW	Doby's Mill Elementary <sup>m</sup>	2801024	57.22			21
LAURENS 56	Joanna-Woodson Elementary <sup>n</sup>	3056022	88.26	5		21
LEXINGTON 1	Oak Grove Elementary <sup>j</sup>	3201009	52.55			23
LEXINGTON 1	Lexington Middle <sup>n</sup>	3201010	22.43		15	
LEXINGTON 1	Midway Elementary	3201055	17.46			20, 21, 23

District	School	School ID	% Poverty Level	Gap(s) Closing		
				African-American*	Hispanic*	Free/Reduced Lunch*
LEXINGTON 2	Springdale Elementary <sup>k</sup>	3202024	54.59			23
LEXINGTON 5	Dutch Fork Elementary <sup>a</sup>	3205042	46.9	1, 3, 5		17, 19, 21
LEXINGTON 5	Seven Oaks Elementary <sup>g</sup>	3205045	62.42	1		
LEXINGTON 5	CrossRoads Middle <sup>l</sup>	3205046	38.38	5		
LEXINGTON 5	Lake Murray Elementary <sup>c</sup>	3205052	19.15			18, 19, 21
LEXINGTON 5	River Springs Elementary <sup>a</sup>	3205053	19.78	1, 3		17
LEXINGTON 5	Ballentine Elementary <sup>c</sup>	3205055	14.13	2, 4, 6, 7		17, 19, 21, 23
MARLBORO	Marlboro County School of Discovery	3501028	70.49	1		
OCONEE	Walhalla Middle <sup>d</sup>	3701006	55.1		13	21
OCONEE	Keowee Elementary <sup>i</sup>	3701012	53.85			18, 21
OCONEE	James M. Brown Elementary <sup>g</sup>	3701016	84.7		13	
OCONEE	Walhalla Elementary	3701022	58.26			19, 21, 23
PICKENS	Ambler Elementary <sup>e</sup>	3901010	61.79			19
PICKENS	East End Elementary <sup>a</sup>	3901017	50.79			17, 21
PICKENS	Holly Springs Elementary <sup>a</sup>	3901020	61.04			17, 19, 22, 23
PICKENS	A R Lewis Elementary <sup>b</sup>	3901021	72.36			19, 22, 23
PICKENS	Liberty Elementary <sup>a</sup>	3901022	71.93			19
PICKENS	Six Mile Elementary	3901027	61.19			17, 19, 21
RICHLAND 2	L W Conder Elementary <sup>c</sup>	4002073	85.1		13	
RICHLAND 2	North Springs Elementary <sup>a</sup>	4002080	50.97	1, 5		
RICHLAND 2	Rice Creek Elementary <sup>a</sup>	4002083	46.24	1		
RICHLAND 2	Bookman Road Elementary <sup>a</sup>	4002087	34.82	3		19
RICHLAND 2	Lake Carolina Elementary <sup>b</sup>	4002089	30.58	2, 4, 5, 7		17, 20, 21, 23
SPARTANBURG 1	Holly Springs-Motlow Elementary <sup>i</sup>	4201009	61.89			18, 21, 23
SPARTANBURG 1	New Prospect Elementary <sup>a</sup>	4201011	62.82			18, 19, 22, 23
SPARTANBURG 2	Chesnee Elementary	4202018	74.16	3		23
SPARTANBURG 2	Carlisle-Foster's Grove Elementary	4202087	53.13			21
SPARTANBURG 2	Oakland Elementary <sup>d</sup>	4202088	44.43			19, 21, 23
SPARTANBURG 3	Cannons Elementary <sup>c</sup>	4203028	68.57	6		22
SUMTER 2	F. J. Delaine Elementary <sup>c</sup>	4302009	94.67	1, 3, 5		17, 19, 21
SUMTER 2	High Hills Elementary <sup>d</sup>	4302012	67.91			17
SUMTER 2	Shaw Heights Elementary <sup>f</sup>	4302019	68.75			19
WILLIAMSBURG	W M Anderson Primary <sup>a</sup>	4501013	97.24	2, 4, 5, 8		17, 20, 21, 24

District	School	School ID	% Poverty Level	Gap(s) Closing		
				African-American*	Hispanic*	Free/Reduced Lunch*
WILLIAMSBURG	St Mark Elementary <sup>a</sup>	4501023	98	1, 5, 7		17, 21, 23
YORK 2	Bethany Elementary <sup>a</sup>	4602011	59.03			17, 23
YORK 2	Griggs Road Elementary <sup>b</sup>	4602047	42.36			21
YORK 2	Crowders Creek Elementary/Middle <sup>g</sup>	4602051	26.03	5		23
YORK 4	Riverview Elementary <sup>d</sup>	4604042	46.77			21
YORK 4	Gold Hill Middle <sup>d</sup>	4604049	10.16	1		
YORK 4	Orchard Park Elementary	4604051	20.22	1		18

Notes for Table:

<sup>a</sup> Recognized in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006

<sup>b</sup> Recognized in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006

<sup>c</sup> Recognized in 2004, 2005, and 2006

<sup>d</sup> Recognized in 2005 and 2006

<sup>e</sup> Recognized 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006

<sup>f</sup> Recognized 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006

<sup>g</sup> Recognized 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006

<sup>h</sup> Recognized 2002, 2003, 2006

<sup>i</sup> Recognized 2002, 2004, 2006

<sup>j</sup> Recognized 2002, 2005, 2006

<sup>k</sup> Recognized 2003, 2004, 2006

<sup>l</sup> Recognized 2003, 2005, 2006

<sup>m</sup> Recognized 2003, 2006

<sup>n</sup> Recognized 2004, 2006

\* Groups are:

1. African-American students, ELA test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Basic or above;
2. African-American students, ELA test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Basic or above;
3. African-American students, ELA test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Proficient or Advanced;
4. African-American students, ELA test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Proficient or Advanced;
5. African-American students, Math test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Basic or above;
6. African-American students, Math test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Basic or above;
7. African-American students, Math test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Proficient or Advanced;
8. African-American students, Math test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Proficient or Advanced;
9. Hispanic students, ELA test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Basic or above;
10. Hispanic students, ELA test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Basic or above;
11. Hispanic students, ELA test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Proficient or Advanced;
12. Hispanic students, ELA test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Proficient or Advanced;
13. Hispanic students, Math test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Basic or above;



14. Hispanic students, Math test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Basic or above;
15. Hispanic students, Math test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Proficient or Advanced;
16. Hispanic students, Math test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Proficient or Advanced;
17. Free- or reduced-price lunch students, ELA test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Basic or above;
18. Free- or reduced-price lunch students, ELA test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Basic or above;
19. Free- or reduced-price lunch students, ELA test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Proficient or Advanced;
20. Free- or reduced-price lunch students, ELA test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Proficient or Advanced;
21. Free- or reduced-price lunch students, Math test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Basic or above;
22. Free- or reduced-price lunch students, Math test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Basic or above;
23. Free- or reduced-price lunch students, Math test, at or above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (Recognized), scored Proficient or Advanced;
24. Free- or reduced-price lunch students, Math test, at or above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Distinguished), scored Proficient or Advanced.

The numbers of elementary and middle schools recognized for closing the achievement gap for at least one target group in at least one subject area increased over the four years studied between 2002 and 2005, but the number decreased slightly in 2006:

- Eighty-seven schools were recognized in 2002;
- One hundred ten schools were recognized in 2003;
- One hundred thirty-two schools were recognized in 2004;
- One hundred thirty-eight schools were recognized in 2005; and
- One hundred thirty-five schools were recognized in 2006.

Eighty-six of the schools identified in 2006 had also been recognized in 2005 for high performance by at least one target group in at least one subject area. Twenty-seven of these 86 schools were recognized for all five years studied (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006). These schools are of particular interest because they show sustained progress in reducing achievement gaps. They are listed in Table 7.

**Table 7**  
**Schools Recognized for Closing Achievement Gap**  
**For Five Consecutive Years (2002 through 2006)**

Cedar Grove Elementary (Anderson One)	Buist Academy (Charleston)	Seaside Elementary (Horry)	Rice Creek Elementary (Richland Two)
West Pelzer Elementary (Anderson One)	Pate Elementary (Darlington)	Dutch Fork Elementary (Lexington Five)	Bookman Road Elementary (Richland Two)
Wren Elementary (Anderson One)	R H Rollings Middle School of the Arts (Dorchester Two)	River Springs Elementary (Lexington Five)	New Prospect Elementary (Spartanburg One)
Hunt Meadows Elementary (Anderson One)	Merriwether Elementary (Edgefield)	East End Elementary (Pickens)	W M Anderson Primary (Williamsburg)
Honea Path Elementary (Anderson Two)	Oakview Elementary (Greenville)	Holly Springs Elementary (Pickens)	St Mark Elementary (Williamsburg)
Marrington Elementary (Berkeley)	Lakewood Elementary (Horry)	Liberty Elementary (Pickens)	Bethany Elementary (York)
Stono Park Elementary (Charleston)	Forestbrook Elementary (Horry)	North Springs Elementary (Richland Two)	

The number of schools recognized for each target group in 2006 is listed in Table 8.

**Table 8**  
**Numbers of Schools Recognized for Gap Reduction in 2006**  
**Target Groups Identified for High Performance**

<b>Target Group(s)</b>	<b>Number of Schools Recognized</b>	<b>Percent of Recognized Schools</b>
African-American Students Only	18	13.3%
Hispanic Students Only	7	5.2
Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Students Only	59	43.7%
African-American Students; Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Students	48	35.6%
Hispanic Students; Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Students	2	1.5%
African-American Students; Hispanic Students; Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Students	1	0.7%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100%</b>

Forty-six schools were recognized in 2006 for closing the gap for at least one target group in PACT ELA only, twenty-six schools for closing the gap in Math only, and sixty-three schools for closing gaps in both ELA and Math.

Not surprisingly, since these schools were chosen because their target demographic groups were achieving near or above the levels of the comparison groups statewide, their overall achievement for all students tended to be high. Of the 135 report card absolute ratings issued for these schools, 34 were Excellent, 81 were Good, and 20 were Average.

The schools also received recognition for achievement and for recent other accomplishments:

- 62 received Palmetto Gold or Silver Awards in 2005-2006;
- 2 received the Palmetto's Finest award for 2005-2006;
- 2 were National Blue Ribbon Award schools in 2004-2005; and
- 27 received Red Carpet awards in the past three years.

To identify the characteristics of these schools which differed from those of other schools not identified for closing achievement gaps which might help to pinpoint the factors behind their success, their report card profile data were compared to those from all schools in the State. The average (mean) values for report card school profile variables in 2006 are listed in Table 9. In Table 9 the data are listed for all 135 gap-closing schools, for the 115 gap-closing schools receiving Excellent or Good Absolute Ratings, and for the 20 gap-closing schools receiving Average Absolute Ratings are listed (none of the identified gap-closing schools received Below Average or Unsatisfactory ratings). In addition, the data for all 716 other elementary and middle schools which received

Absolute Ratings in 2006 and the data for those other schools aggregated by their Excellent or Good, Average, or Below Average or Unsatisfactory ratings are also listed in Table 9.

In 2006 the schools identified for closing achievement gaps had lower percentages of students in poverty than all other schools (57.8% poverty in gap schools compared to 73.7% poverty in all other schools). However, when compared to schools receiving similar Absolute Ratings, the gap-closing schools had somewhat higher poverty levels. The poverty level for gap-closing schools rated Excellent or Good was 55.0%, compared to 48.8% for all other schools rated Excellent or Good. Similarly, the poverty level for gap-closing schools rated Average was 74.3%, compared to 70.3% for other schools.

The values for many report card variables were similar among gap-closing schools and other schools which received the same ratings. However, the dollars spent per student were consistently higher for gap-closing schools, as were the survey results for teacher, student, and parent satisfaction with the school. The percentage of students having disabilities was lower for gap-closing schools compared to other schools. These findings are similar to those found in the previous EOC studies of gap-closing schools.

The higher level of satisfaction with the school reported by teachers, students, and parents reported for gap-closing schools compared to other schools has been a consistently robust finding in all of the EOC studies of achievement gap-closing schools since the first study published in 2003. The connection between client satisfaction with the school and the school's success at reducing achievement gaps was also identified in the study of gap-closing schools conducted for the EOC by the University of South Carolina Educational Policy Center (*Climate for High Achievement: A Study of Gap-Closing Schools in South Carolina*, 2007).

**Table 9**  
**Comparison of Mean Values of 2006 Report Card Variables**  
**Elementary and Middle Schools Identified for Closing Achievement Gaps**  
**Compared to All Other Elementary and Middle Schools**

Report Card Variable	Gap Closing Elementary/Middle Schools in 2006				All Other Elementary/Middle Schools in 2006			
	All Gap-Closing Schools (n=135)	Excellent or Good Absolute Ratings (n=115)	Average Absolute Rating (n=20)		All Other Schools (n=716*)	Excellent or Good Absolute Ratings (n=123)	Average Absolute Rating (n=276)	Below Average or Unsatisfactory Absolute Ratings (n=317)
Poverty Index	57.8	55.0	74.3		73.7	48.8	70.3	86.2
Dollars per Student	6649	6629	6761		6807	6444	6446	7266
Student:Teacher Ratio	19.6	19.8	18.2		19.0	19.8	19.5	18.4
Student Attendance	96.7	96.7	96.4		96.1	96.7	96.2	95.8
Teacher Attendance	95.0	94.9	95.0		94.7	95.2	94.8	94.5
Prime Instructional Time	90.2	90.2	90.1		89.1	90.6	89.4	88.2
Student Retention	2.7	2.6	3.3		3.3	2.0	3.1	3.9
Days of Professional Development	13.3	13.5	12.3		13.5	12.7	13.6	13.7
Teachers with Advanced Degrees	54.7	54.5	55.5		53.0	56.8	53.4	51.0
Teachers Out of Field of Certification	1.9	2.2	0.4		4.5	1.4	2.3	7.5
Teachers Returning from Previous Year	86.8	86.9	86.7		84.8	88.1	87.0	81.6
Average Teacher Salary	43287	43392	42682		42149	43656	42580	41185
Percent Spent of Teacher Salaries	62.0	62.2	61.2		61.8	64.1	62.9	59.9
Principal's Years at School	6.6	7.1	3.9		5.2	7.4	5.2	4.5

Report Card Variable	Gap Closing Elementary/Middle Schools in 2006				All Other Elementary/Middle Schools in 2006			
	All Gap-Closing Schools (n=135)	Excellent or Good Absolute Ratings (n=115)	Average Absolute Rating (n=20)		All Other Schools (n=715*)	Excellent or Good Absolute Ratings (n=123)	Average Absolute Rating (n=275)	Below Average or Unsatisfactory Absolute Ratings (n=317)
Percent Parents Conferencing	96.7	96.5	97.9		94.9	96.7	96.9	92.4
Percent Students with Disabilities	6.7	6.8	6.5		10.0	7.4	9.4	11.5
Percent Students Gifted and Talented	19.0	20.3	11.3		13.1	23.5	14.1	8.2
Percent Spent on Instruction	67.9	67.9	68.1		67.5	68.6	67.6	66.9
Percent Students Over-Age for Grade	0.9	0.9	1.2		3.0	1.0	2.2	4.5
Percent Students Suspended/Expelled for Violent/Criminal Behavior	0.2	0.2	0.1		1.0	0.4	0.7	1.5
Teacher Satisfaction Learning Environment	95.9	96.2	94.4		88.0	95.3	92.5	81.2
Student Satisfaction Learning Environment	89.2	89.2	88.9		80.8	87.0	82.8	76.7
Parent Satisfaction Learning Environment	91.2	91.5	88.9		82.6	89.8	84.6	78.2
Teacher Satisfaction Social & Physical Environment	96.7	96.9	95.9		89.3	96.6	93.0	83.3

Report Card Variable	Gap Closing Elementary/Middle Schools in 2006			All Other Elementary/Middle Schools in 2006			
	All Gap-Closing Schools (n=135)	Excellent or Good Absolute Ratings (n=115)	Average Absolute Rating (n=20)	All Other Schools (n=715*)	Excellent or Good Absolute Ratings (n=123)	Average Absolute Rating (n=275)	Below Average or Unsatisfactory Absolute Ratings (n=317)
Student Satisfaction Social & Physical Environment	87.3	88.0	83.3	80.5	86.3	82.4	76.8
Parent Satisfaction Social & Physical Environment	90.5	90.8	88.9	79.7	88.8	82.5	73.7
Teacher Satisfaction Home & School Relations	93.7	95.2	85.0	74.8	95.2	83.6	59.2
Student Satisfaction Home & School Relations	90.4	90.9	87.9	85.9	89.6	87.0	83.7
Parent Satisfaction Home & School Relations	87.7	87.8	86.7	79.8	85.6	80.6	77.0
Enrollment	591.9	605.5	513.3	545.2	637.8	584.8	475.1

\* Does not include data from 22 schools which did not receive Absolute ratings in 2006. Report card data from State Department of Education, October 20, 2006.

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